have been difficult, if not impossible, for Dr. Wandolleck to do in the case of the other still more aberrant species—I consider that I am justified in being the first to introduce this interesting series of forms to science, especially as I have been engaged for a long time past in collecting material for a monograph on the Phoridæ. Since, however, the anatomical investigation of the allied form was already commenced some weeks ago by Dr. Wandolleck, I am in addition handing over to him adequate material for a similar purpose. From him therefore we shall have to expect in the near future further interesting results dealing with this group of forms.

In the present paper I would merely add a few observations on the ethology of the species discovered by me. I found the insect in numbers in my wholesale captures ("quantitativen Fängen") which I made in the Bismarck Archipelago, and particularly in the forest, with a dead bird as bait. For obtaining creatures of this kind I can therefore recommend my method of capture, which I have described in detail in the 'Berichten der Academie der Wissenschaften in Berlin,' Jahrg. 1896, ii. p. 17. At first on examining it with the naked eye I took the insect to be a *Sminthurus* (Poduridæ). With us representatives of this genus are frequently found among captures made upon carrion, but in the Bismarck Archipelago they appear to be absent. I allude to the outward resemblance merely in order to facilitate their possible discovery. Subsequently under the microscope I actually considered the first specimen to be a *Phora* which had lost its wings, so great is the resemblance to that genus. I may add that I found a few specimens besides other carrion-insects upon the flower of *Amorphophallus*, an Aroideid, which has an unpleasant carrion-like odour and grows almost upon the ground. The insect is therefore decidedly a carrion-feeder, like the rest of the Phoridæ.

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## PROCEEDINGS OF LEARNED SOCIETIES.

### GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

June 23rd, 1897.—Dr. Henry Hicks, F.R.S., President, in the Chair.

The following communication was read:—

'Pleistocene Plants from Casewick, Shacklewell, and Grays.' By Clement Reid, Esq., F.L.S., F.G.S.

The plants from Casewick and Shacklewell were obtained by washing two lumps of clay in the collection of the late Sir Joseph

Prestwich. The species are few and call for little remark, except that the climate was not Arctic. They are all common British forms.

The collection from Grays consists of leaves, already partly determined by Gaudin and Herr, though unpublished, and some lumps of clay, out of which the Author washed a few seeds. The flora points clearly to a temperate climate and mild winters.

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## MISCELLANEOUS.

### "*Mesites*."

The name *Mesites* has been used in systematic zoology for no less than four different genera, belonging to different classes of animals, as anyone may learn for himself from Scudder's 'Nomenclator Zoologicus.' "Thus bad begins, but worse remains behind"; for three of these names are actually current. To one man *Mesites* conveys the idea of a bird, for another it means a weevil, while some of us have long known by that name nothing but a peculiar palæozoic echinoderm. Which is the real Simon Pure?

In vol. iv. part 2 of C. J. Schönherr's 'Genera et Species Curculionidum,' on p. 1043, *Mesites* was proposed for a genus of weevils, type *M. pallidipennis*, by C. H. Boheman. This volume was published at Paris by Roret and at Leipzig by Fleischer, and the date on the titlepage of the part is 1838. An advertisement of Roret's on the back of the half-title indicates that the book was issued in January of that year; the date, 1 Febr. 1838, attached to the preface of vol. v. confirms this.

But in April 1838 Isid. Geoffroy St.-Hilaire applied the same name to a kind of sun-bittern from Madagascar (*M. variegata*). The chief references are:—Comptes Rendus, vi. p. 443, April 9; Revue Zoologique, 1838, April, p. 50; and Ann. Sci. Nat. ix. p. 189. In the 'Catalogue of Birds in the British Museum,' vol. xxiii. p. 244, 1894, Dr. Bowdler Sharpe maintained this name, and even based on it a family name, Mesitidæ, as had already been done, though in a somewhat different sense, by C. L. Bonaparte. Boheman's priority to Geoffroy might conceivably be disputed by a prejudiced ornithologist, could such a one be found, were it not for the evidence of Reichenbach, who, on p. 6 of his 'Handbuch der Columbariæ,' 1850, altered the name of the bird to *Mesenas*, since "Der Name *Mesites* war um ein Jahr früher durch Schönherr schon an eine Rüsselkäfergattung vergeben." It was probably for the same reason that Bonaparte, according to Gray ('Hand-list Gen. and Sp. Birds Brit. Mus.' p. 267, 1869), changed *Mesites* to *Mesitornis* in 1855; but whether this was ever more than a MS. name is uncertain, since no reference can be found, and its alleged author still used *Mesites* on May 12, 1856 ('Comptes Rendus,' xlii. p. 876).

In April 1842 L. Jenyns ('Zoology, Voyage of H.M.S. 'Beagle,'' part iv. Fish, p. 118) applied the name *Mesites* to three new species